

NEWS FOR THE HOMEOWNER

UNDERSTANDING PROPERTY VALUES AND TAXES  
MARKET VALUE NOTICES AND TAX STATEMENTS MAILED

CITY RESIDENTS RECEIVED TWO SEPARATE notices in March regarding property values and property taxes. The following is a summary of the 2007 *Market Valuation Notices* and the 2007 *Hennepin County Property Tax Statements*. For more information, call the City Assessor’s Office at 952-563-8724, or visit the City Web site at [www.ci.bloomington.mn.us](http://www.ci.bloomington.mn.us), keywords: Property taxes.



2007 Market Valuation Notices

This year’s assessment, as of January 2, 2007, reflects the softening of the residential market that occurred in 2006. On a monthly basis throughout the year, City Assessing staff analyzes property sales and uses that data to determine market value. Bloomington’s average 2007 residential increase was less than 1 percent, the lowest overall increase to residential properties in many years. The 2007 estimated market value will be used to calculate property taxes payable in 2008.

On **Wednesday, April 11, 7 p.m.**, in the **Council Chambers, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road**, the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization will hear testimony from property owners who believe their 2007 estimated market value is incorrect. The Local Board of Appeal is made up of City Council-appointed Bloomington residents who have a background in real estate. Applicants should provide market evidence to the board explaining their position. Residents are encouraged to call the City Assessor’s Office at any time to discuss their market value.

2007 Hennepin County Property Tax Statements

The 2007 tax calculation is based on the January 2, 2006, market value, which considers the market activity that occurred in 2005. The appeal for the values on which 2007 taxes are based was held in April 2006.

PROTECTING CITIZENS  
TIME-OF-SALE INSPECTIONS

ALL SINGLE- AND TWO-FAMILY dwellings, condominiums, townhouses and mobile homes are required to have an inspection prior to being listing for sale. The inspecting report must be available for review during the time the home is offered for sale. The Time-of-Sale Program provides potential purchasers with information about the condition and code compliance of a dwelling and requires the correction of immediate hazards.

The evaluator will examine the dwelling’s visible structural elements such as heating, electrical and plumbing systems, and other construction components. Accessible, unoccupied areas such as attics and crawl spaces will also be viewed. No building components will be taken apart during inspection.

Beginning May 1, the City is reinstating the practice of allowing residents to choose to have the inspection performed by either a City inspector for \$180 or to choose from the list of licensed evaluators.

For information, visit [www.ci.bloomington.mn.us](http://www.ci.bloomington.mn.us), keywords: Time of Sale, or call 952-563-8930.

OUTSTANDING LEADER  
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR  
CHARLES HONCHELL RETIRES



AFTER 19 years of service with the City, Public Works Director Charles Honchell

will retire at the end of April. Bloomington became a leader in innovation among cities on Honchell’s watch. He established a storm water utility to supply needed funding for extensive storm water, sewer and ponding systems upgrades. He also developed and implemented the Pavement Management Program, a computerized system that prolongs pavement life and reduces overall costs to property owners. Honchell was key to successful transportation improvements including TH169, I-494 and I-35W upgrades, and the development of light rail transit and American Boulevard. Under his direction, all of the infrastructure was developed and in place for the Mall of America’s opening in 1992. He was instrumental in setting the stage for current and future infrastructure needs of Bloomington’s growing Airport South District.

Honchell headed the construction of improved facilities that consolidated staff and allowed all Public Works equipment to be housed indoors, enabling the City to provide more efficient and timely service, especially snow removal, and protect its capital investments. Under his leadership, the Water Treatment Plant doubled its groundwater treatment capacity to continue to meet the community’s water needs.

Highly regarded as an infrastructure expert, Honchell represented the city, state and region on many committees including Met Council’s Transportation Advisory Commission. He served as President of the City Engineers Association of Minnesota and the Minnesota Chapter of American Public Works Association. Honchell was named one of the Top 10 Public Works Officers in the country.

Honchell earned a civil engineering degree at Michigan’s Lawrence Technological University. In 1968, he received the nation’s first master’s degree in public works from the University of Pittsburgh. He spent 10 years with the city of Pontiac, Michigan and was Public Works Director for the city of Roseville, Minnesota.

As Bloomington Public Works Director, Honchell was able to develop plans to meet the future needs of the community and realize the results.

“Public Works services touch the lives of people dozens or even hundreds of times a day,” Honchell said. “One of the reasons I chose this career was to try to give something

LOCAL RAMBLERS OUTPERFORM THE MARKET  
RESIDENTS CHOOSE TO MAINTAIN AND UPGRADE THEIR HOMES

RAMBLERS HAVE BEEN GOOD INVESTMENTS for Bloomington homeowners. Quality construction and attractive neighborhoods, where saplings planted 50 years ago are now mature trees, helped these midcentury houses maintain their value. In addition, their size makes them affordable as starter homes and attractive to seniors searching for a one-level, accessible floor plan.

The best indicator of ramblers’ market value is what people are willing to pay for them. The average price of ramblers has increased faster than for other types of homes built in Bloomington during the same period. Between 1990 and 2006, the value of Bloomington ramblers rose more than

170 percent. The value of all other house styles rose 149 percent.

People value their ramblers, in part, because of the quality of materials used in construction. Douglas fir framing, cedar siding, oak floors and copper plumbing are durable and attractive materials for new owners. Relatively small rambler designs are also inherently energy efficient, although most homes have benefitted from energy upgrades including attic insulation, efficient furnaces and new windows.

According to data from the last census, residents move into their Bloomington houses and stay put for a long time. As a result, residents have a strong desire to maintain and upgrade their homes and neighborhoods. Berne Thury, a 36-year resident, said that with its conservative structure, her 1957 rambler is very adaptable.

“You can keep these homes up-to-date and still not change their integrity,” Thury said. “I did not want this house to stop being a rambler. For me, it still had to fit in the neighborhood.”

Resident concerns regarding residential subdivisions and the compatibility of large houses with

**Thury feels that the rambler is adaptable. She has made several improvements to her home, including enclosing the area between the garage and the house to create a beautiful and useful space.**



“You have to express yourself,” said Thury, who created and installed her own pottery tiles for the original fireplace.

surrounding neighborhoods was the impetus for an ordinance recently adopted by the City Council. The ordinance is designed to better integrate new homes and additions in existing residential neighborhoods by establishing new single-family house height limits, prevailing lot widths and tree preservation requirements for residential subdivisions.

“Paying attention to the scale of new construction helps ensure the rambler will never feel out of place,” Bloomington’s Community Development Director Larry Lee said. “Some cities have suggested that their 1950s-era housing is obsolete and should be redeveloped. Bloomington is taking a different approach by communicating the inherent value and possibilities of ramblers to the 12,000 people who own one.”

